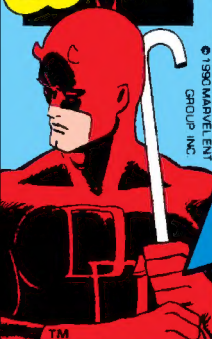


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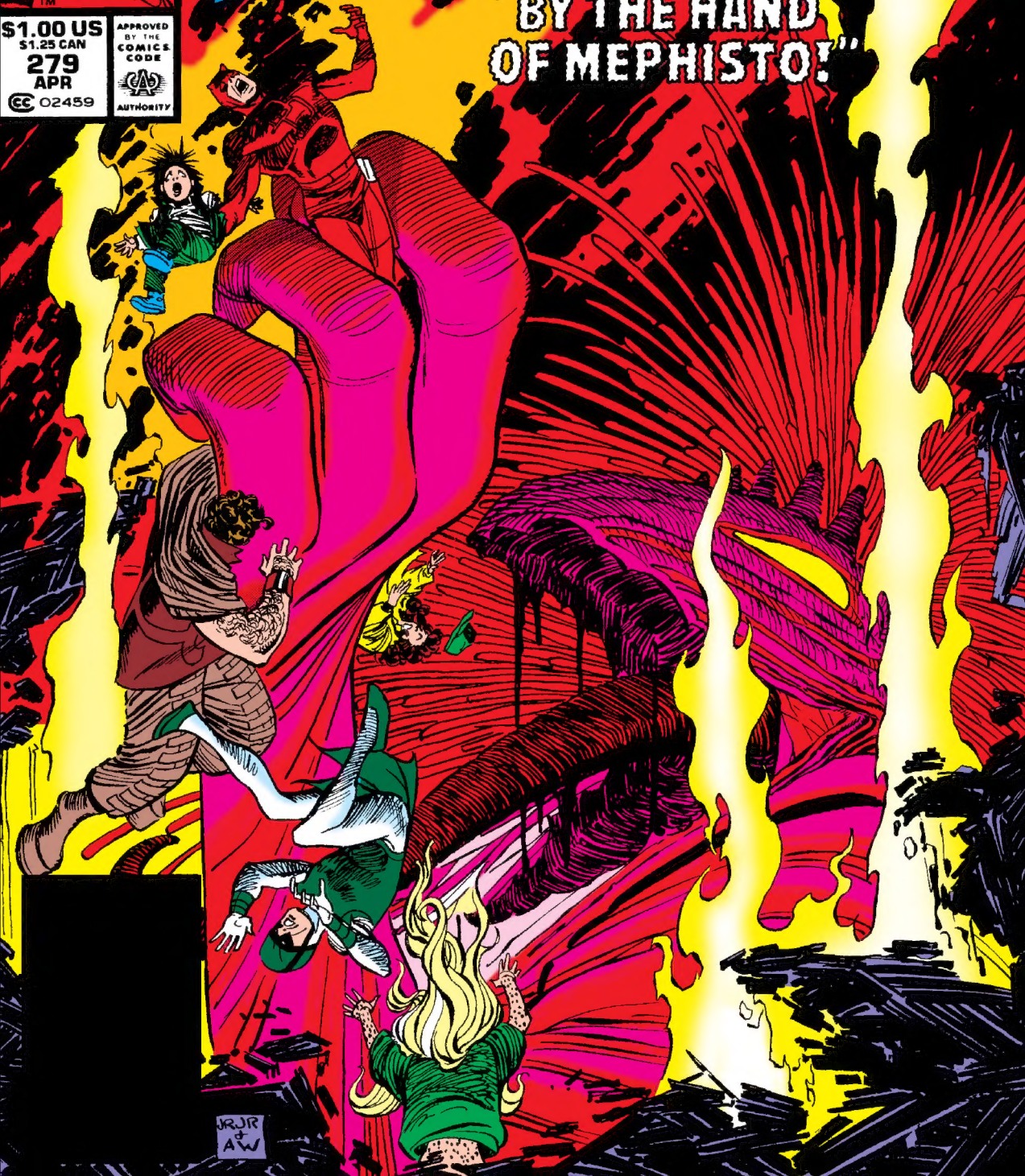
APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY



DAREDEVIL

THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!

**"BY THE HAND
OF MEPHISTO!"**



STAN LEE PRESENTS

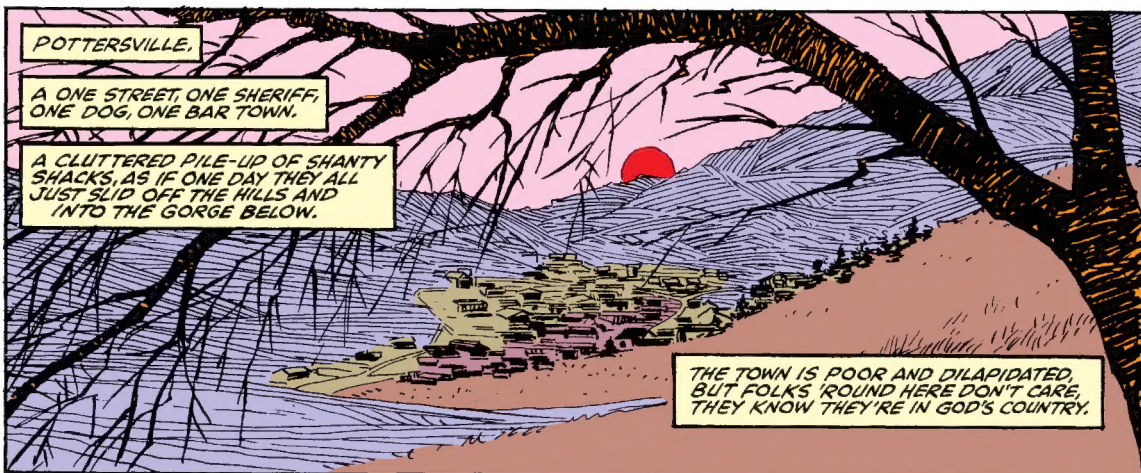
BEFORE THE FLAME

ANN NOCENTI
WRITER
JOHN ROMITA JR.
PENCILS
AL WILLIAMSON
INKS
JOE ROSEN
LETTERS
MAX SCHEELE
COLORS
RALPH MACCHIO
EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO
EDITOR
IN CHIEF

MA SAID STAY
AWAY FROM THE
GOAT. SHE SAYS
THE GOAT IS MEAN
AN' LOCO.

I KNOW
BETTER.

THIS GOAT'S
OKAY, NO
CRAZIER
THAN ME.

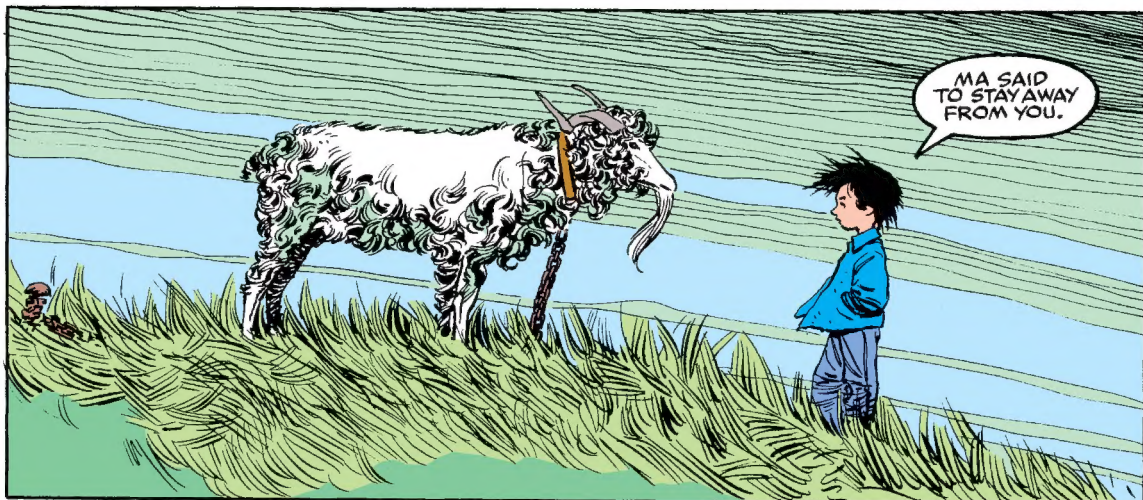


POTTERSVILLE.

A ONE STREET, ONE SHERIFF,
ONE DOG, ONE BAR TOWN.

A CLUTTERED PILE-UP OF SHANTY
SHACKS, AS IF ONE DAY THEY ALL
JUST SLID OFF THE HILLS AND
INTO THE GORGE BELOW.

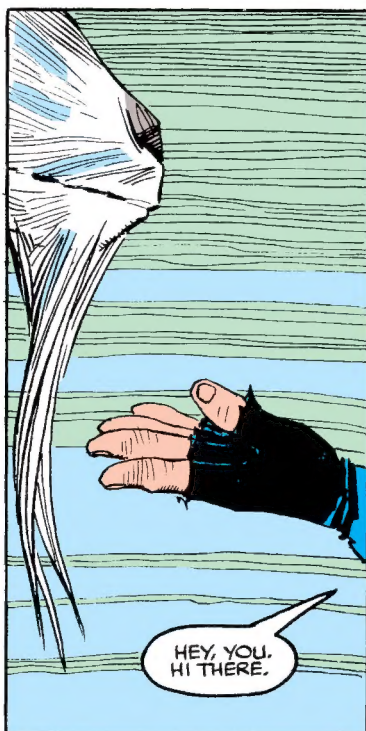
THE TOWN IS POOR AND DILAPIDATED,
BUT FOLKS 'ROUND HERE DON'T CARE.
THEY KNOW THEY'RE IN GOD'S COUNTRY.



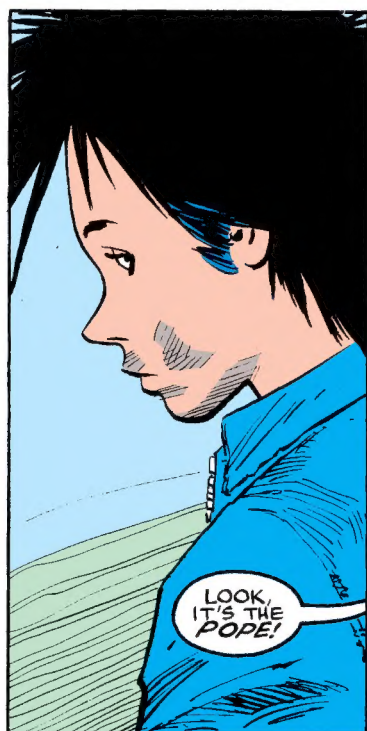
MA SAID
TO STAY AWAY
FROM YOU.



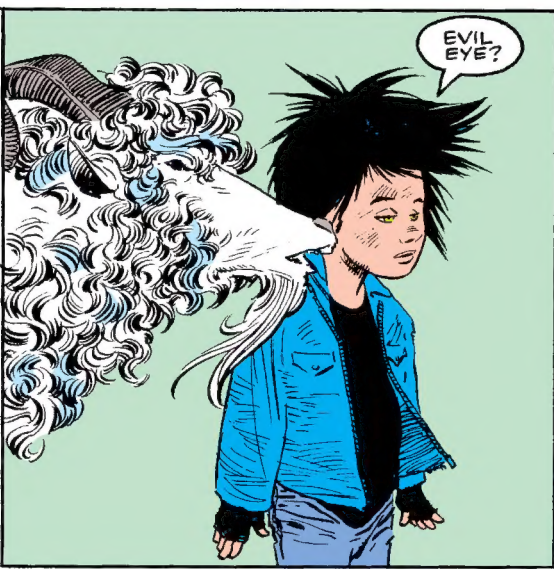
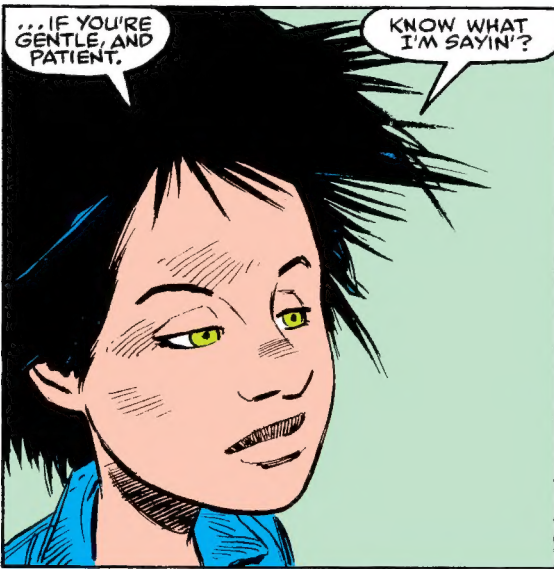
STAY AWAY
FROM THE LOCO
GOAT.

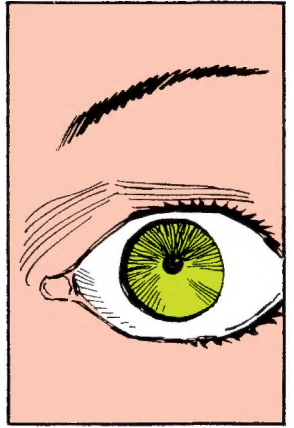
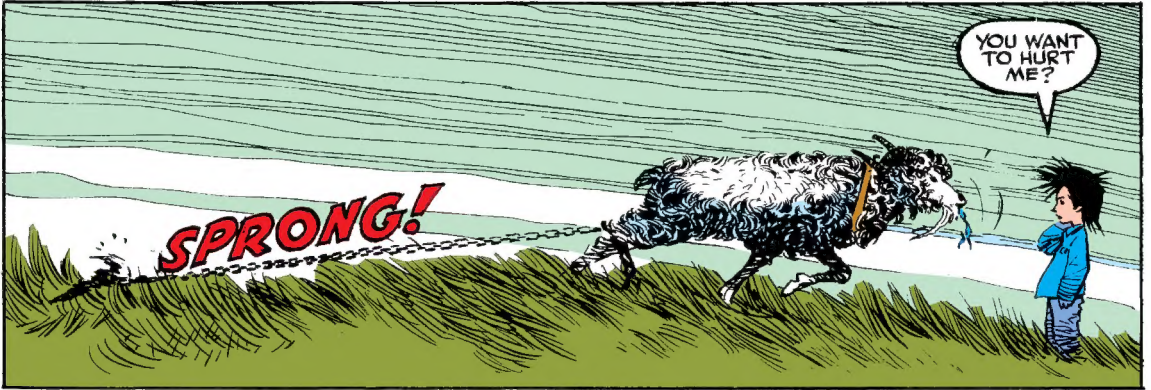
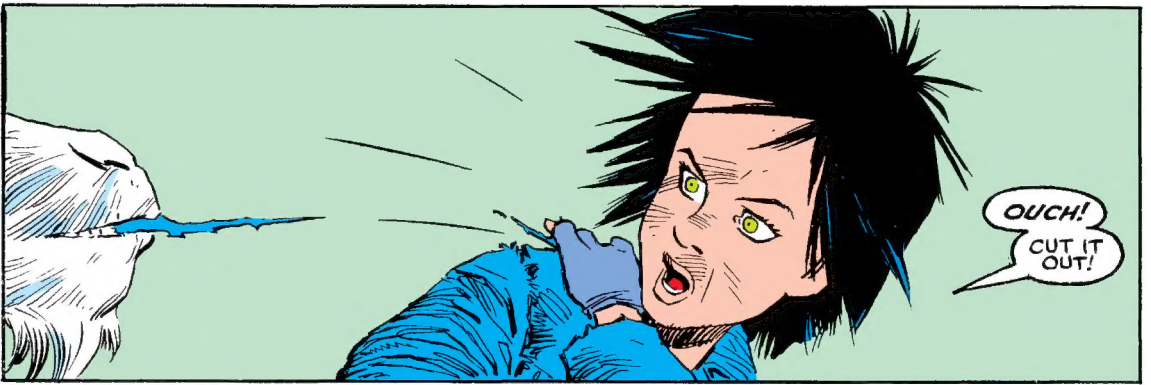


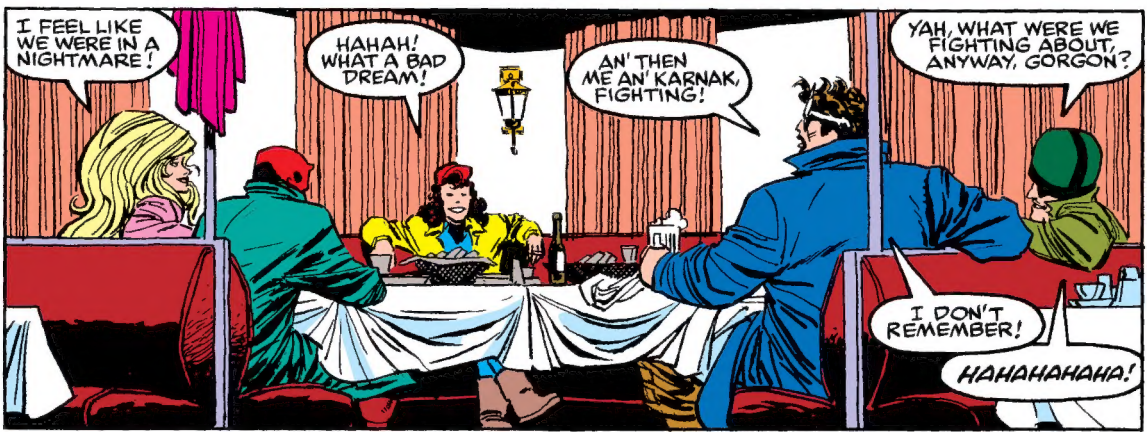
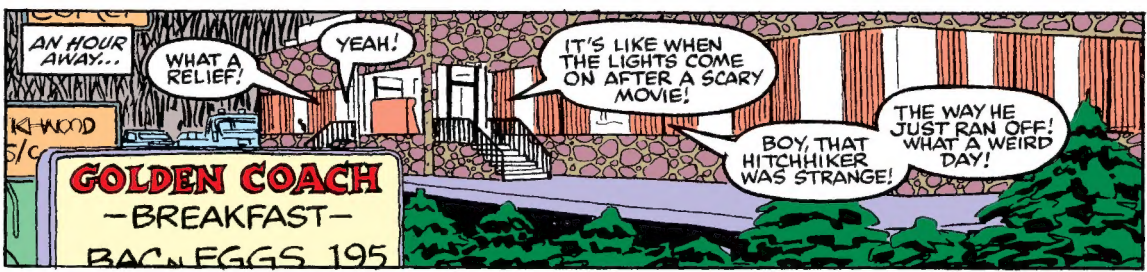
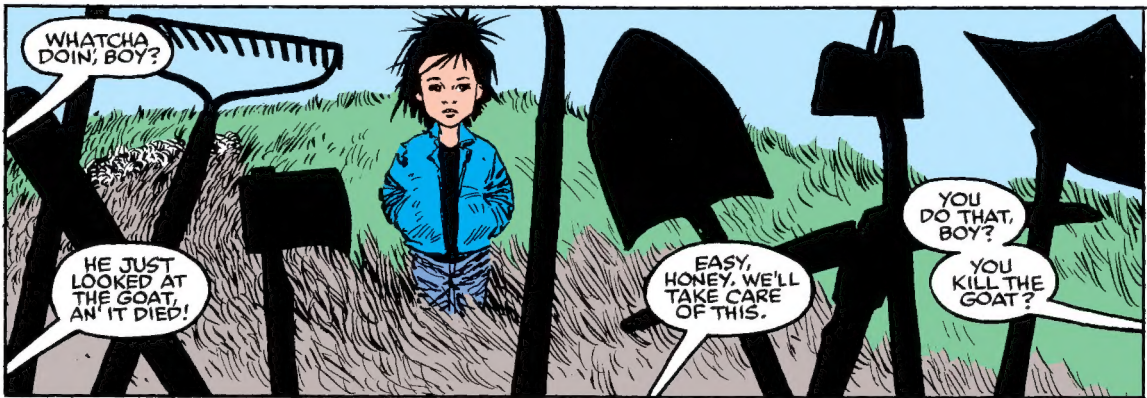
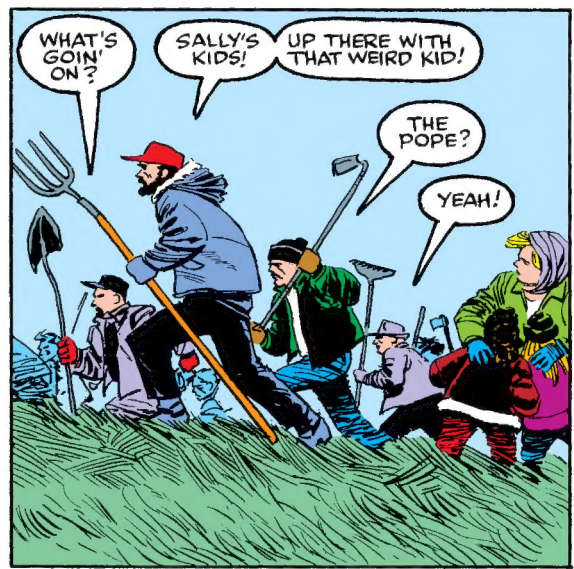
HEY, YOU.
HI THERE.

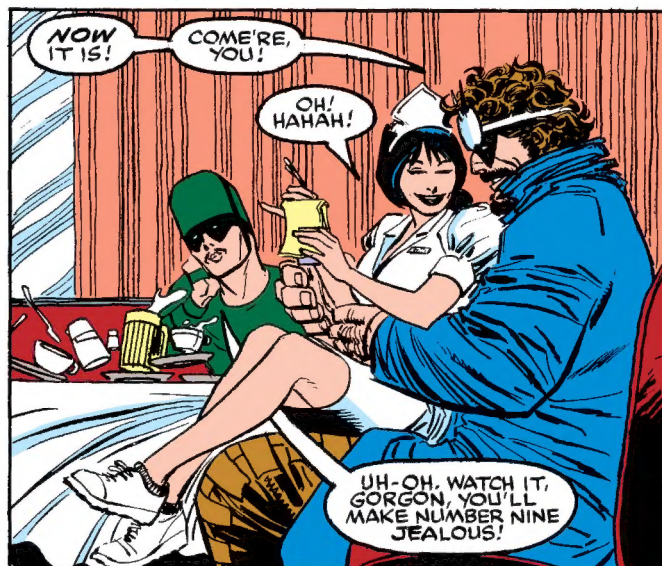
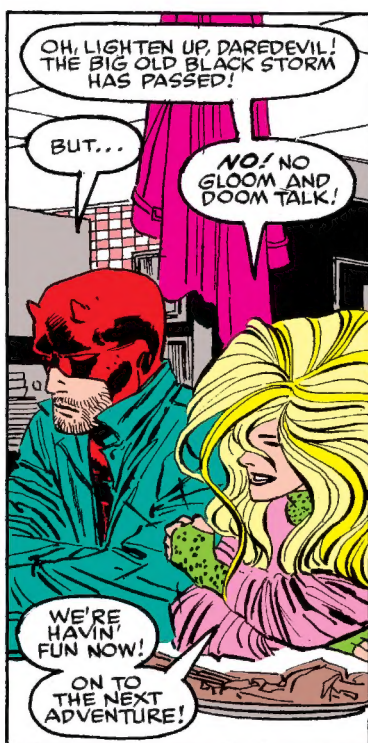


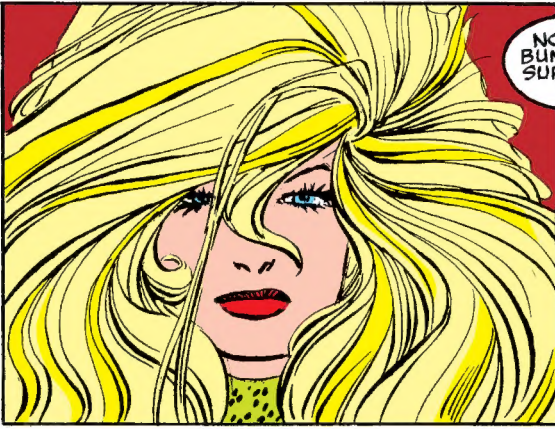
LOOK,
IT'S THE
POPE!







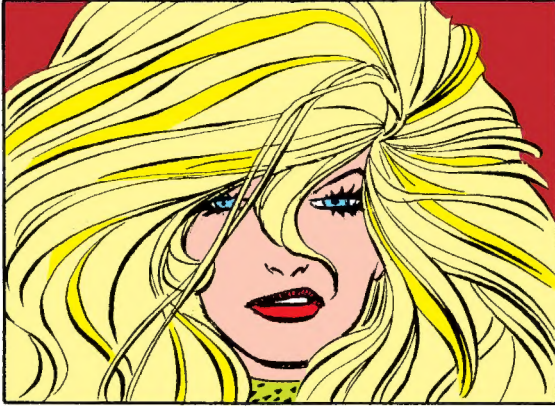




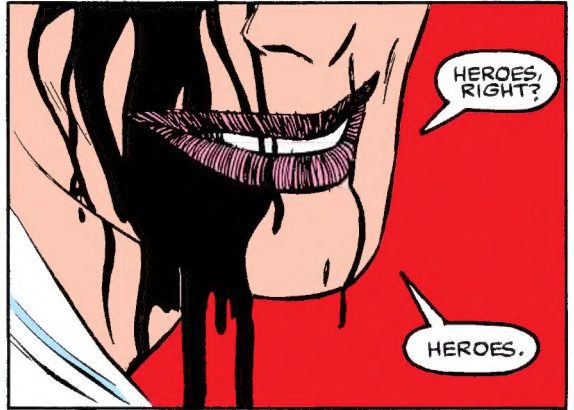
NO, YOU'RE A
BUNCH OF THOSE
SUPERHEROES,
RIGHT?



COME
ON, YOU
CAN TELL
ME!



YOU
GUYS ARE
HEROES.

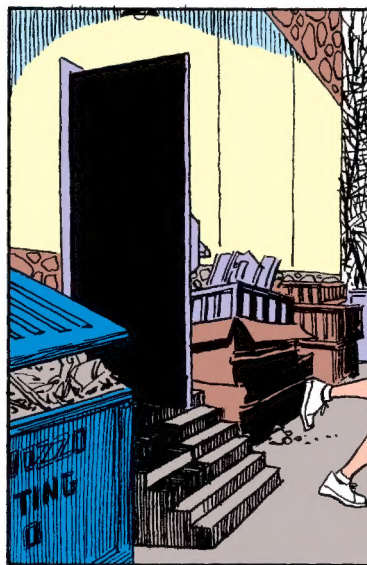
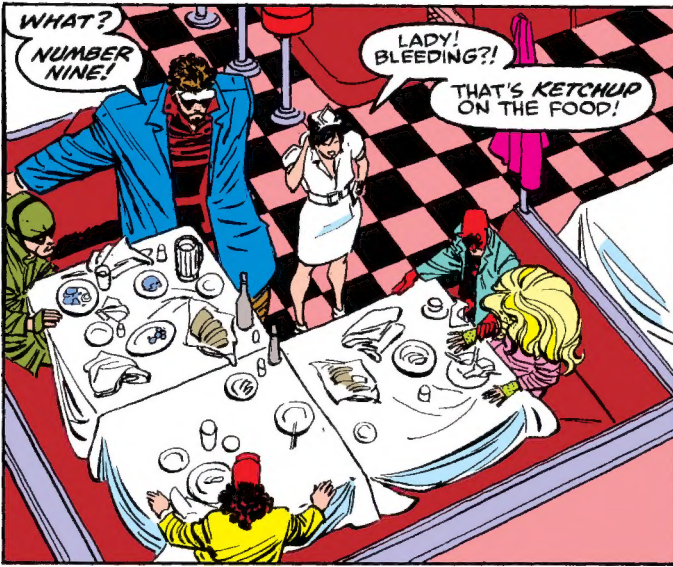


HEROES,
RIGHT?

HEROES.



**YOU'RE
BLEEDING
ALL OVER
THE FOOD!**





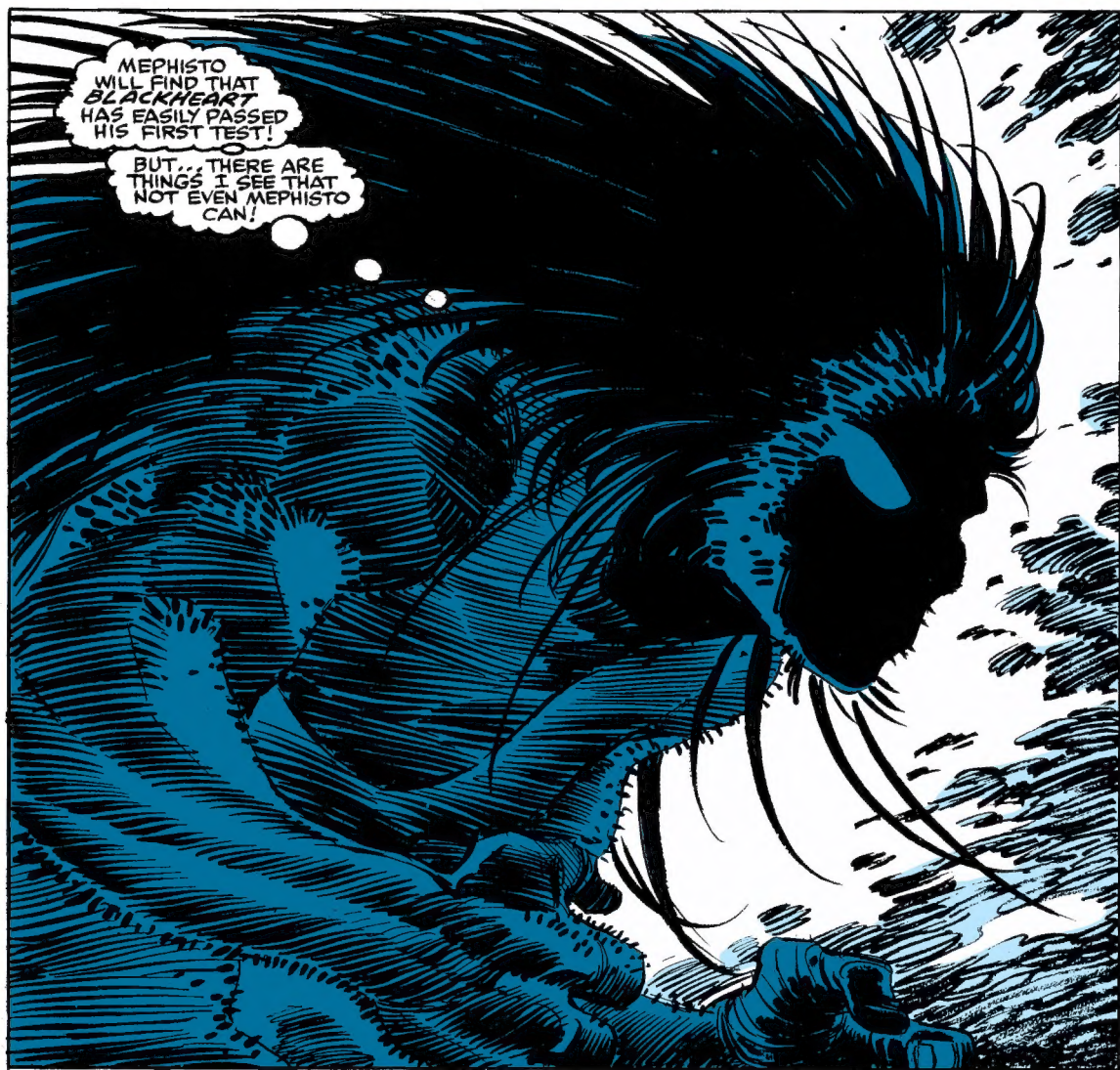
I'VE LEARNED TO
CLOAK MYSELF.
DAREDEVIL NO LONGER
SENSES IT'S ME.

THEY ARE OBLIVIOUS.
THEY HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT IT IS THEY ARE
APPROACHING.



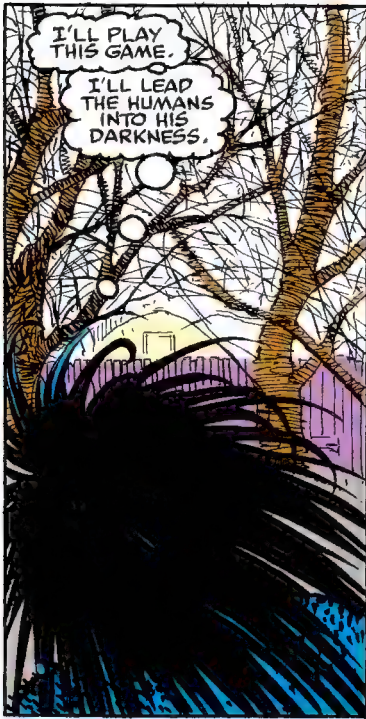
I NUDGE
AND PUSH THEIR
JEALOUSY, THEIR
PRIDE, THEIR
GLUTTONY.

IT IS
SO EASY
TO TEMPT
HUMANS.
THEY ARE
SLOPPY,
THEY ERR
SO EASILY.



MEPHISTO
WILL FIND THAT
BLACKHEART
HAS EASILY PASSED
HIS FIRST TEST!

BUT... THERE ARE
THINGS I SEE THAT
NOT EVEN MEPHISTO
CAN!

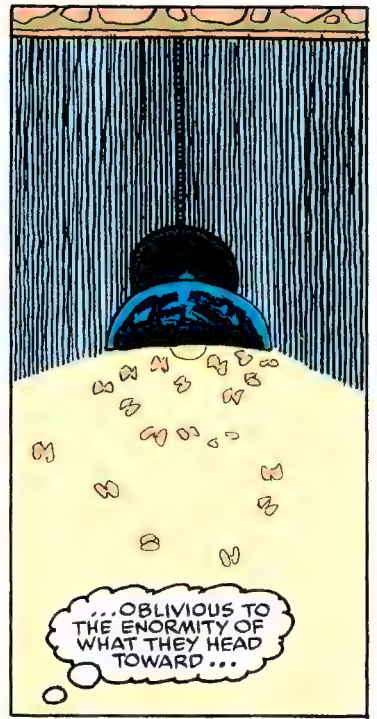


I'LL PLAY
THIS GAME.

I'LL LEAD
THE HUMANS
INTO HIS
DARKNESS.



THEY ARE SO
CLOSE, THEY DANCE
AROUND AND
DRAW CLOSER,
BLIND...



...OBLIVIOUS TO
THE ENORMITY OF
WHAT THEY HEAD
TOWARD...



BUT MEPHISTO
IS IN FOR AN
AWAKENING.

HIS RHYTHMS
ARE OLD, HIS
STYLE IS TIRED.



EVIL RESONATES
TO A NEW SOUND,
ONE THAT HE CAN
NOT HEAR.

YES, MEPHISTO.
YOUR BEAT IS OLD,
AND YOU CAN'T HEAR
THE NEW MUSIC...



YOU KNOW
NOT WHAT
YOU HEAD
TOWARD...

THE NETHER-REALM.

I STAND HERE,
ONE MAN, AND
I SAY UNTO YOU--

--RISE UP
AND *DEFY*
ME!

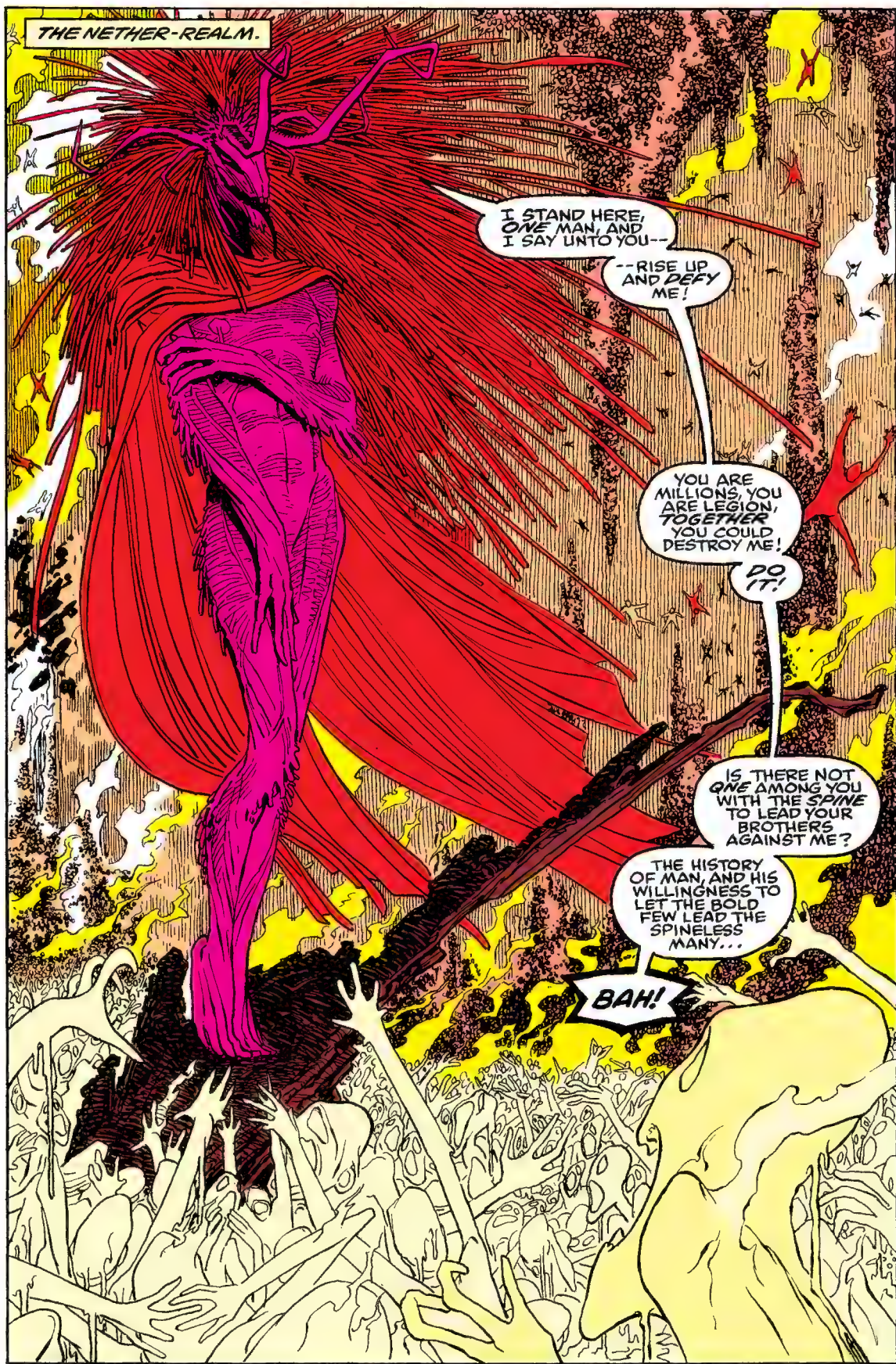
YOU ARE
MILLIONS, YOU
ARE LEGION,
TOGETHER
YOU COULD
DESTROY ME!

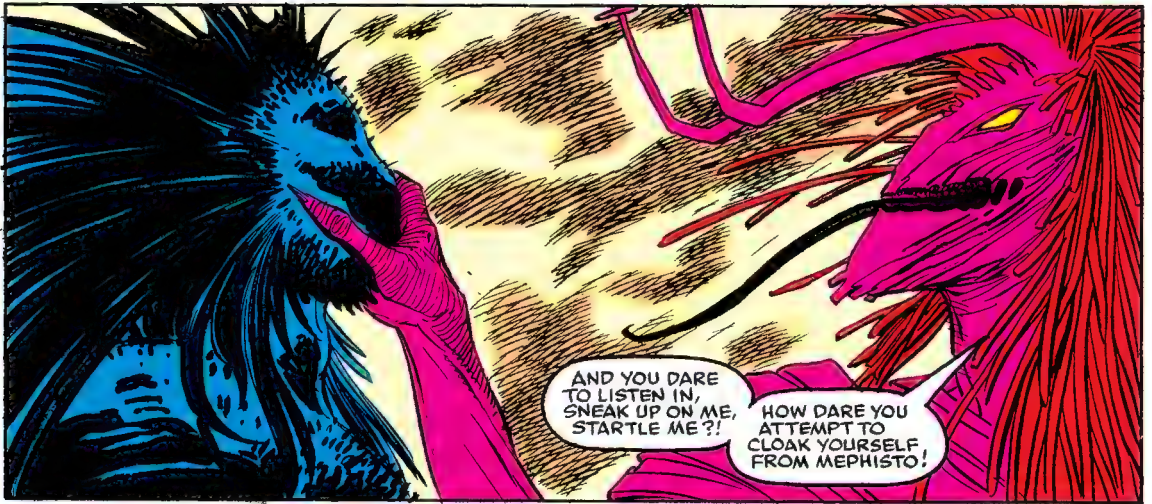
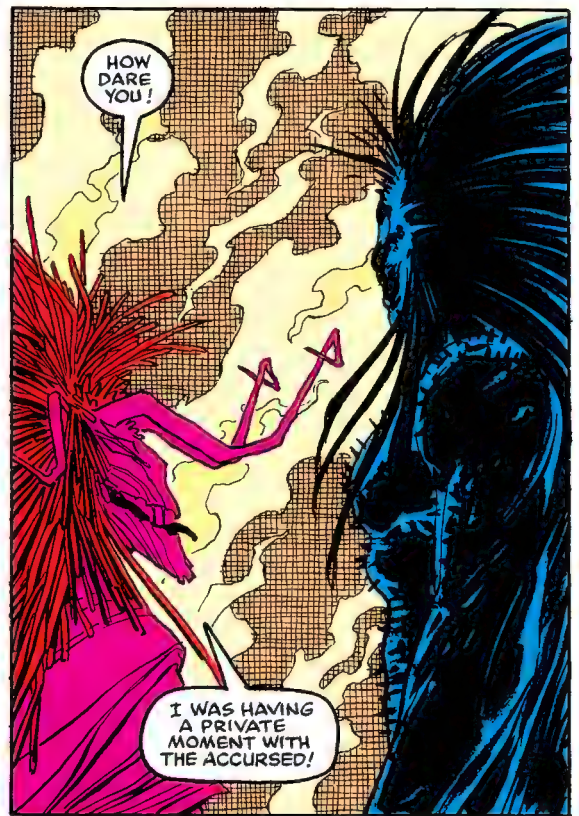
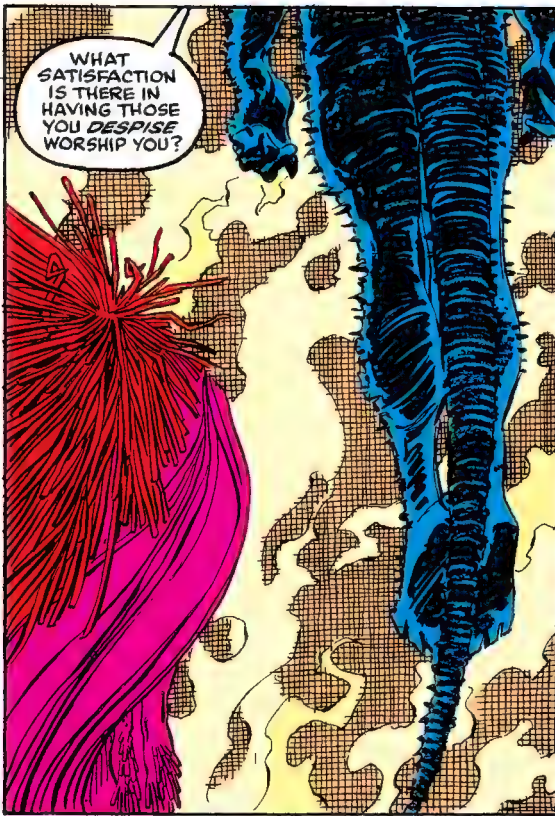
DO
IT!

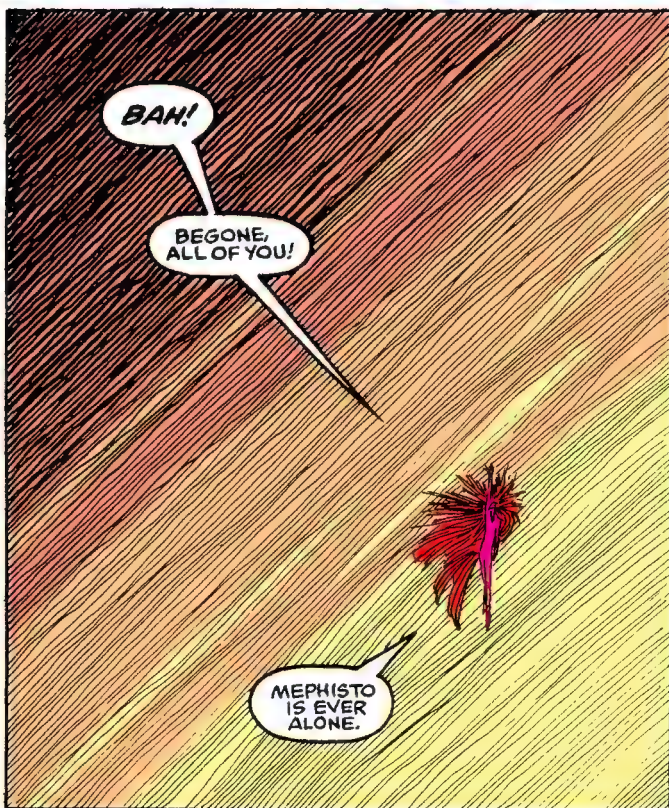
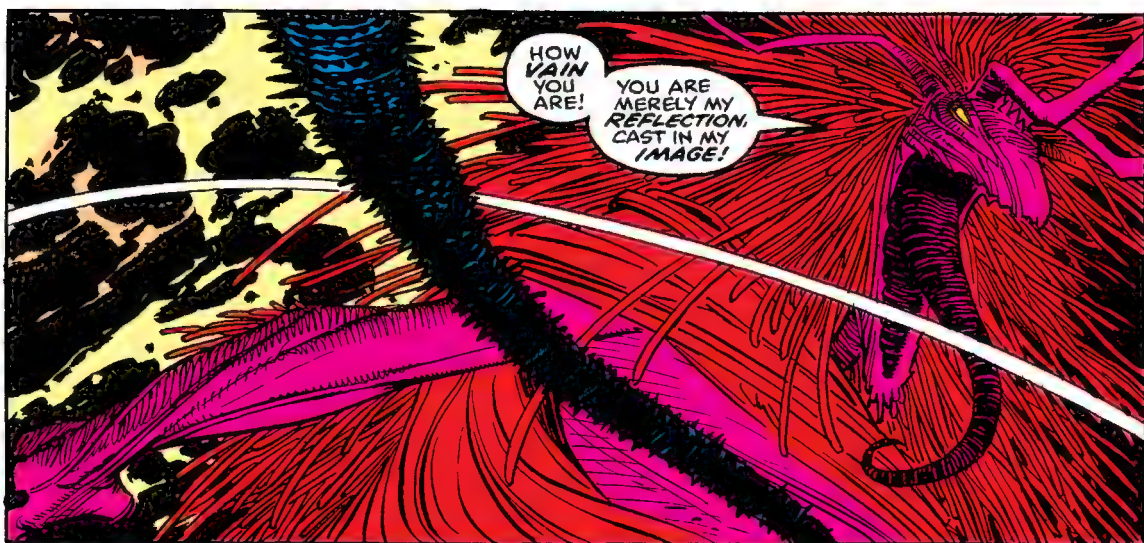
IS THERE NOT
ONE AMONG YOU
WITH THE *SPINE*
TO LEAD YOUR
BROTHERS
AGAINST ME?

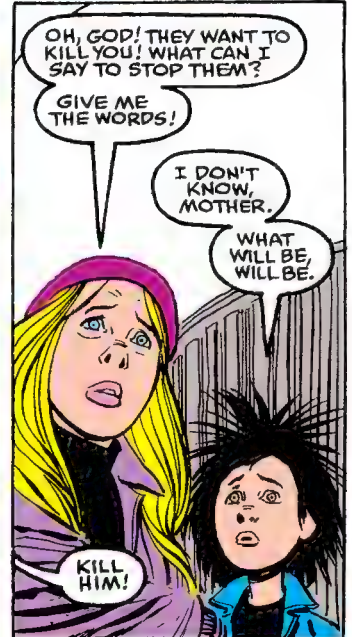
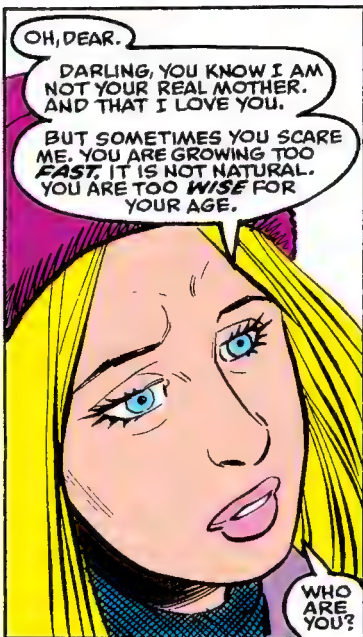
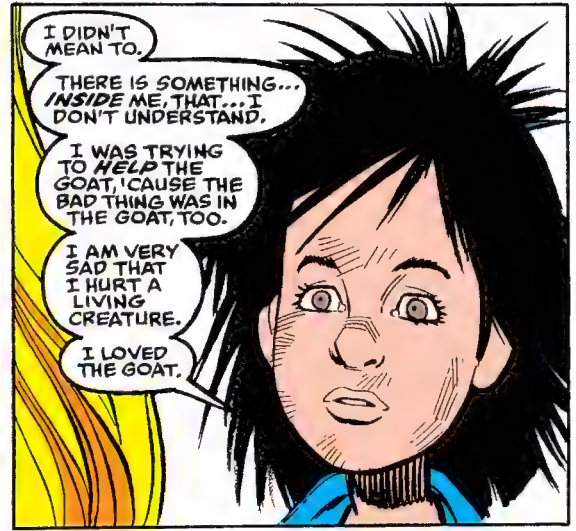
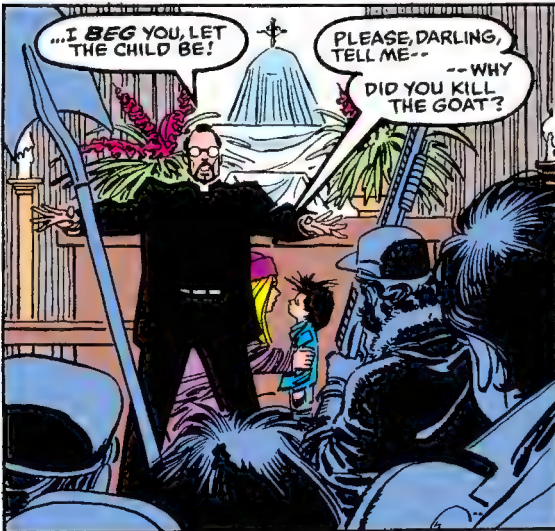
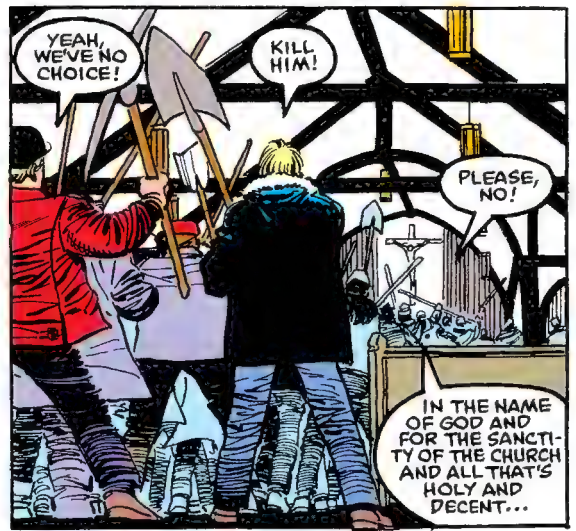
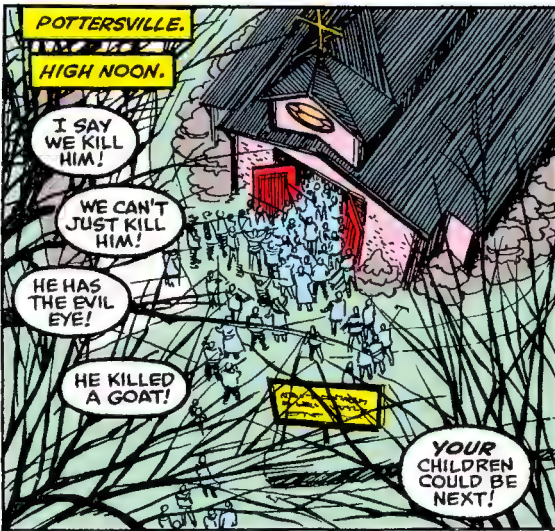
THE HISTORY
OF MAN, AND HIS
WILLINGNESS TO
LET THE BOLD
FEW LEAD THE
SPINELESS
MANY...

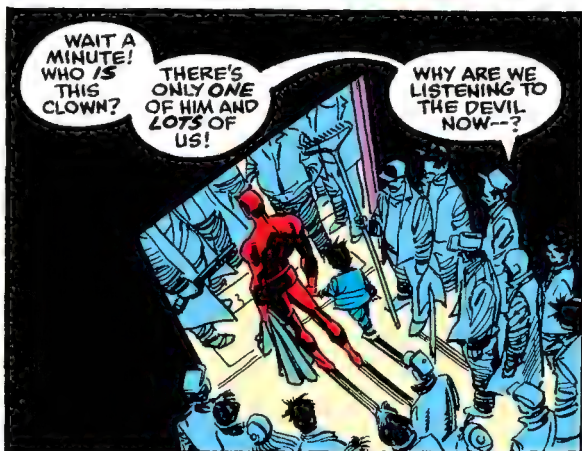
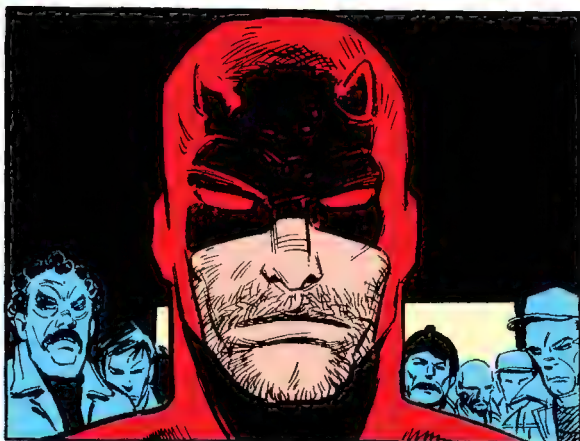
BAH!

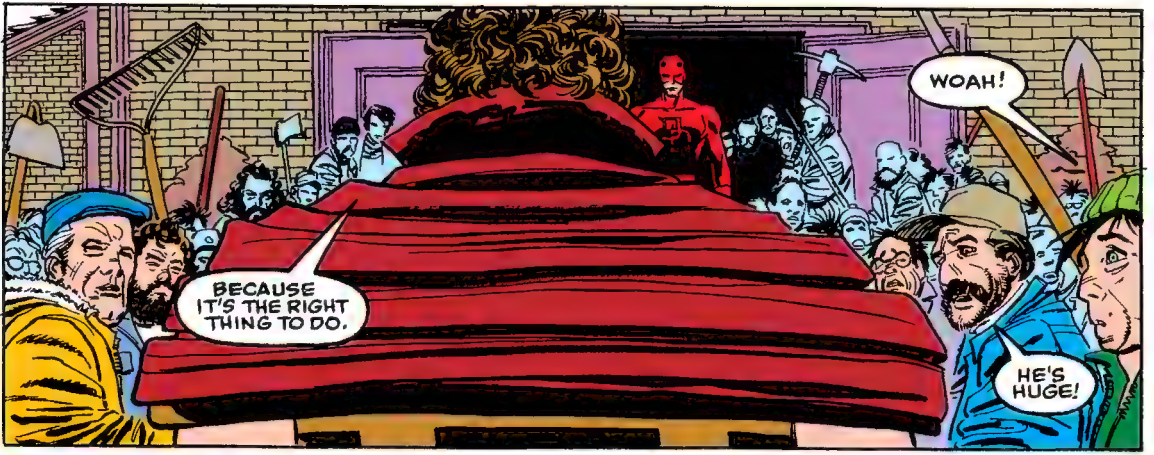












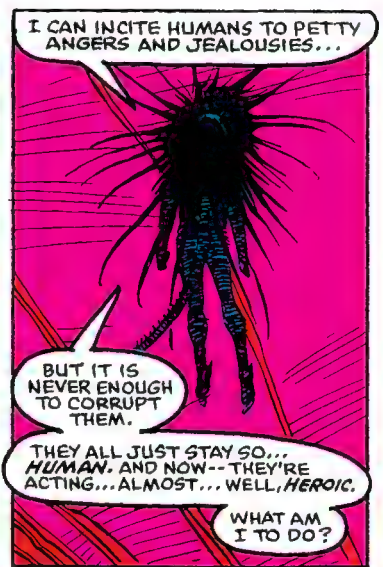


MEPHISTO?

YES, MY SON?



I HAVE FAILED.

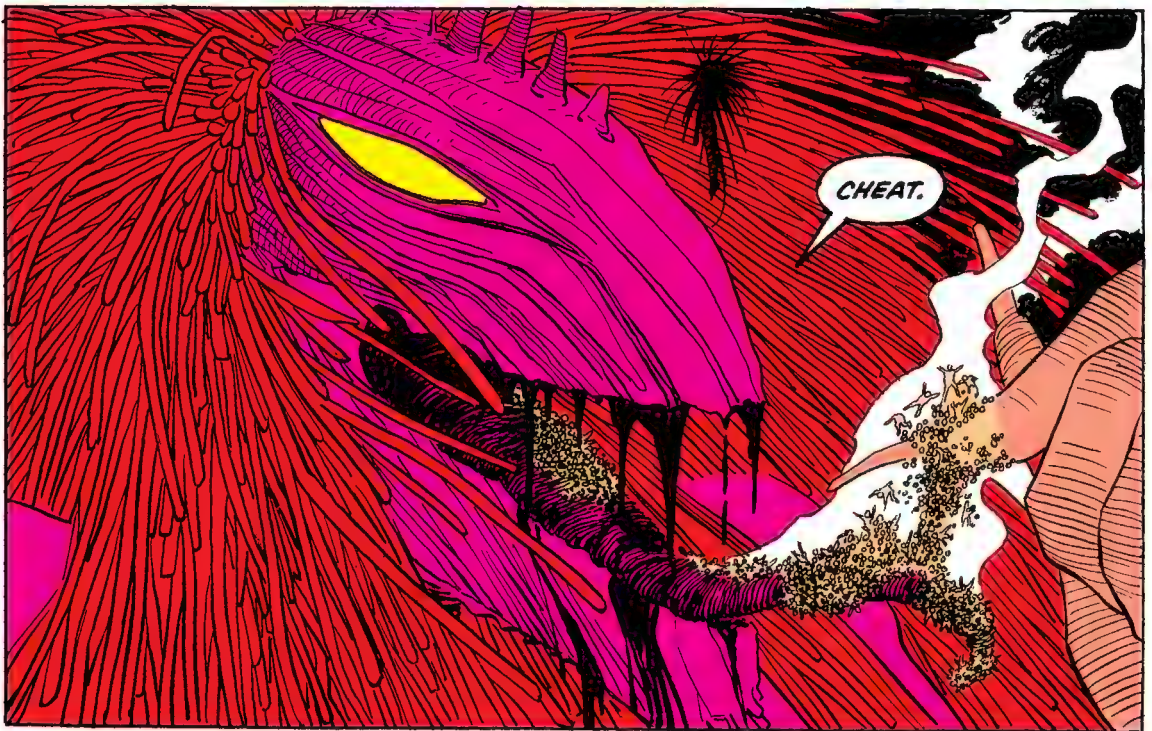


I CAN INCITE HUMANS TO PETTY ANGERS AND JEALOUSIES...

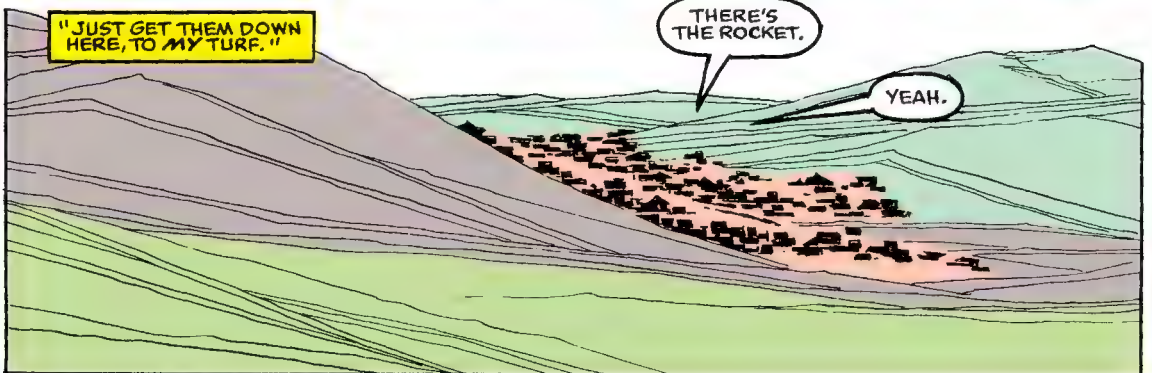
BUT IT IS NEVER ENOUGH TO CORRUPT THEM.

THEY ALL JUST STAY SO... HUMAN. AND NOW-- THEY'RE ACTING... ALMOST... WELL, HEROIC.

WHAT AM I TO DO?



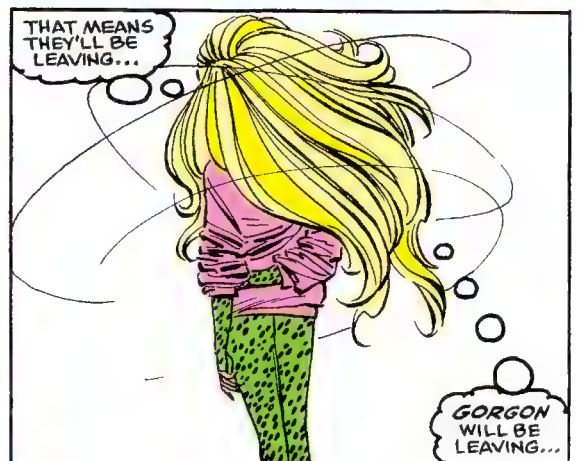
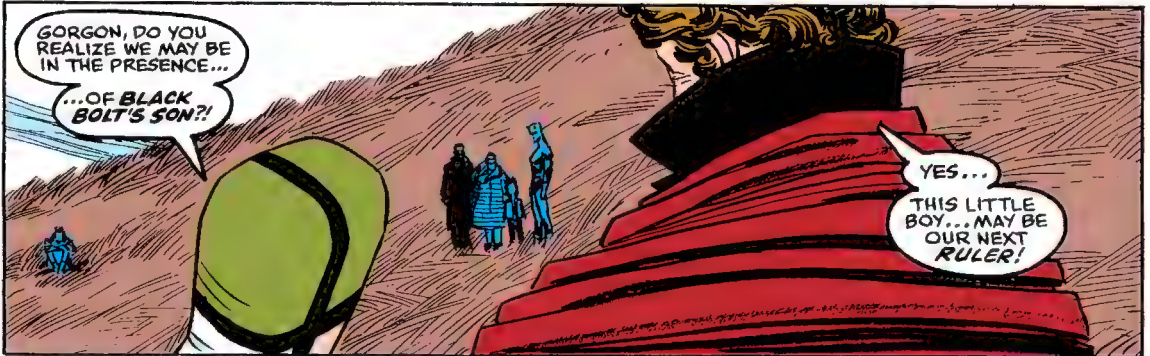
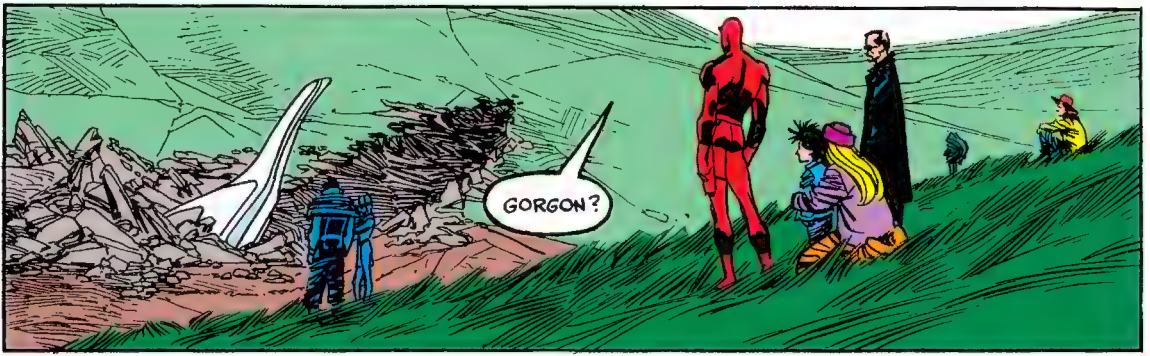
CHEAT.

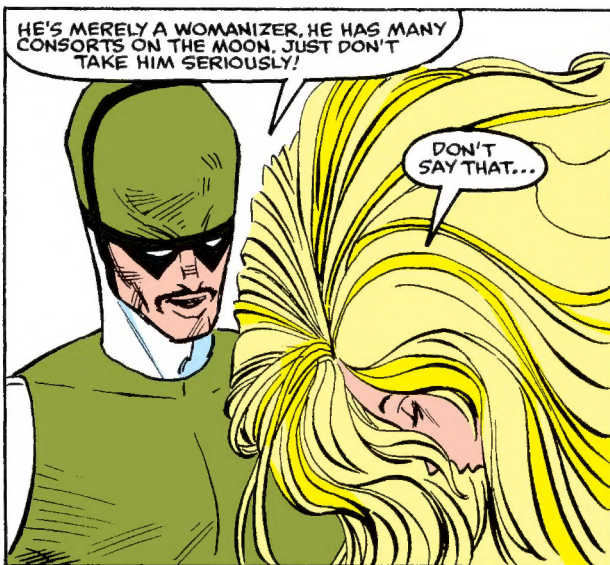
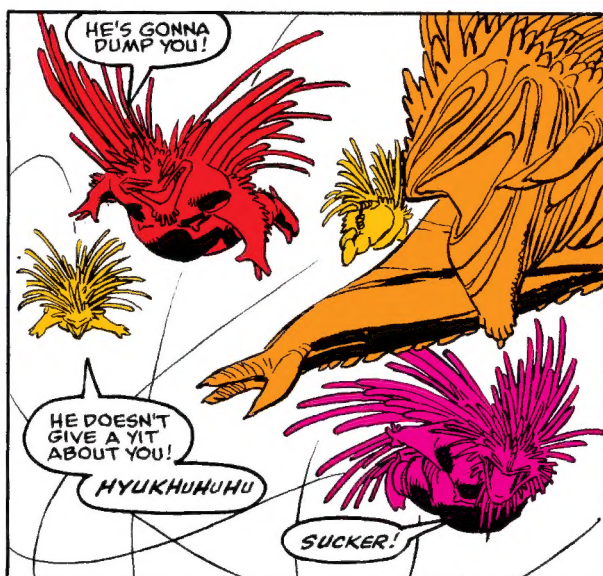
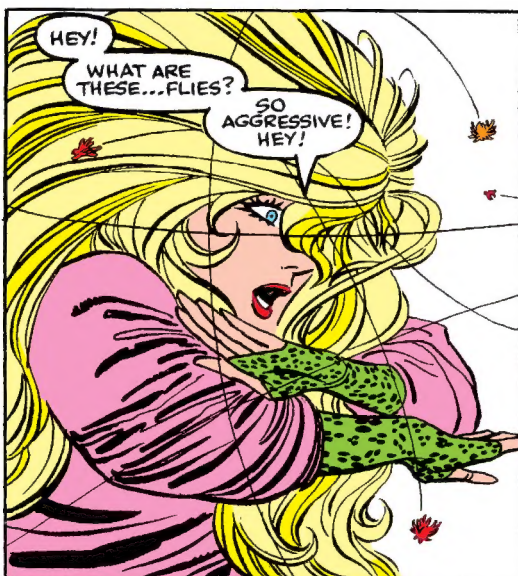


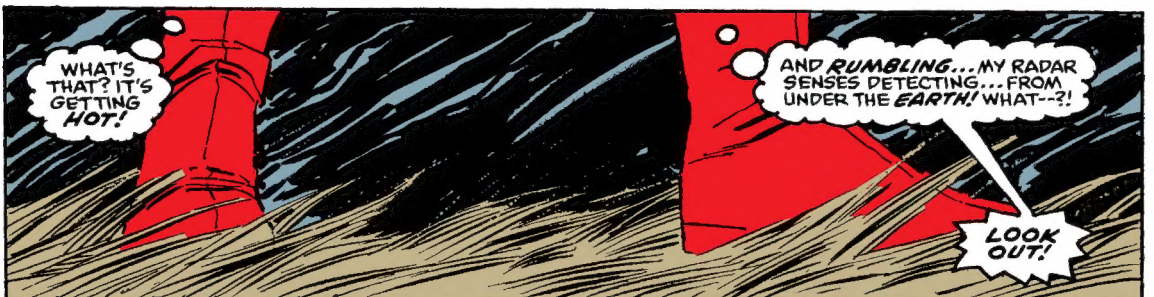
"JUST GET THEM DOWN HERE, TO MY TURF."

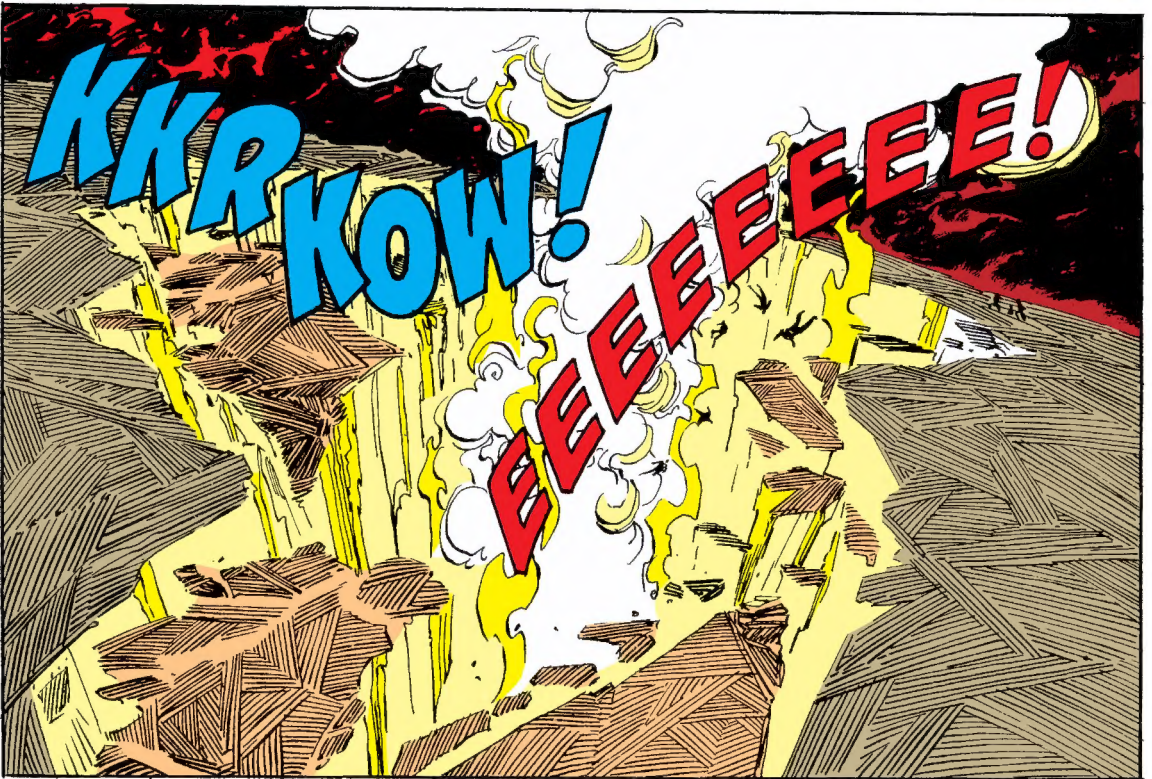
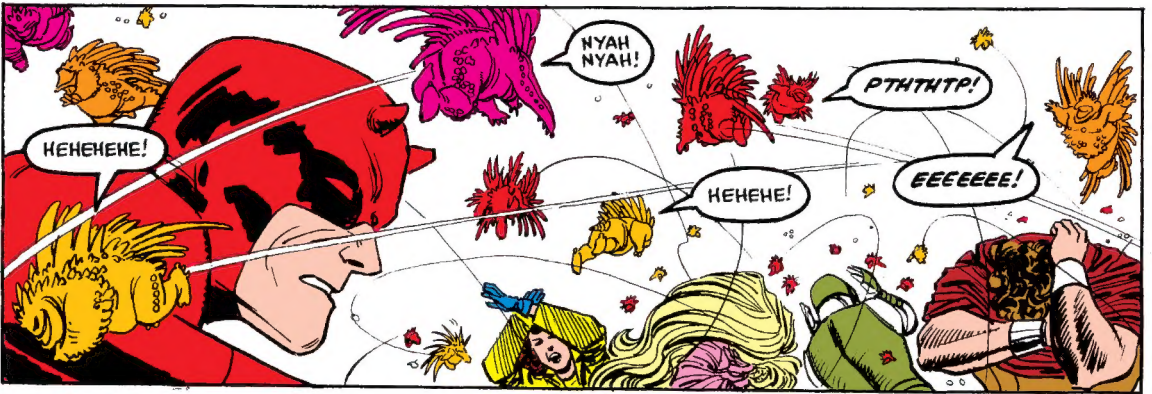
THERE'S THE ROCKET.

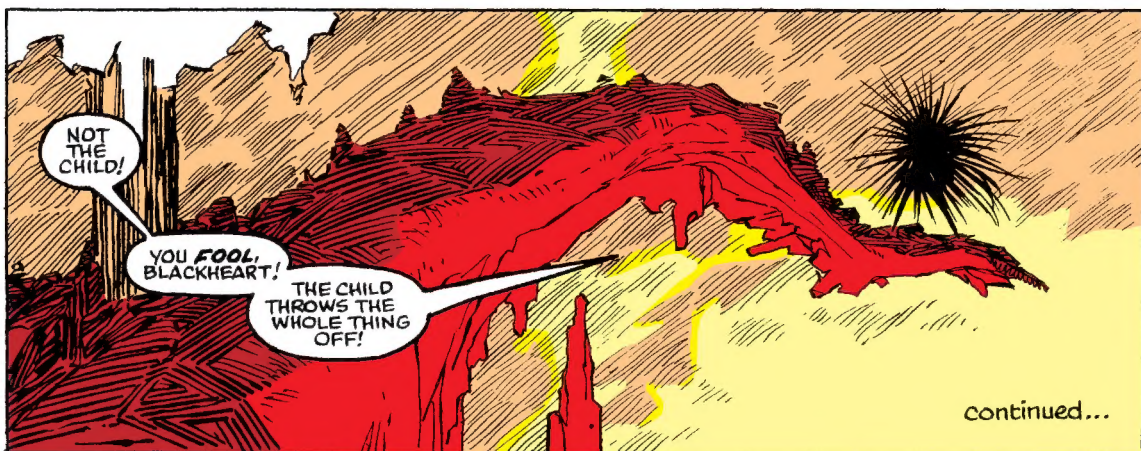
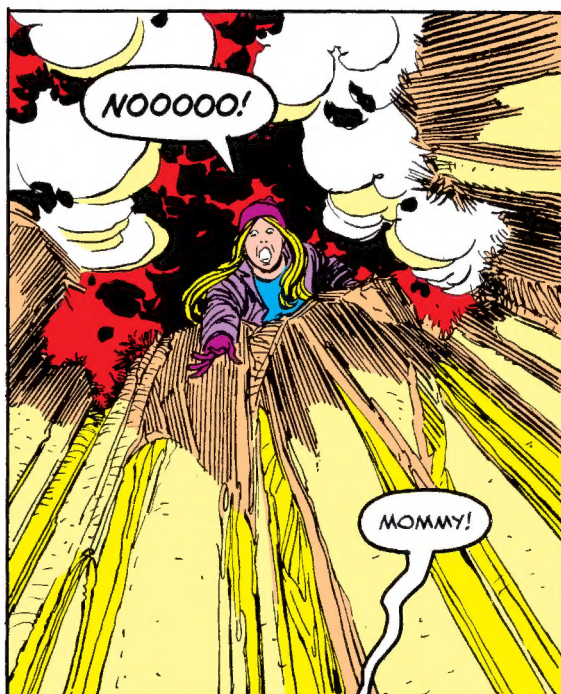
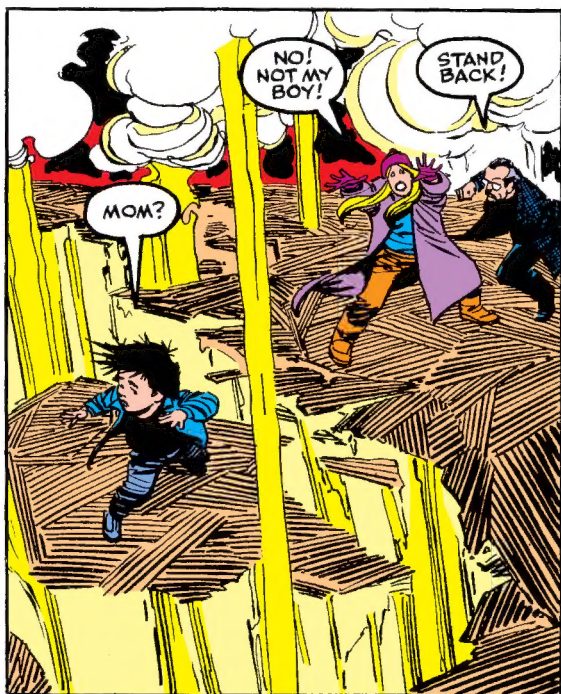
YEAH.











continued...